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WHERE THE CHRISTMAS TREE GLISTENS

The holiday spirit is spread throughout the Queen City, including at the landmark Saskatchewan Legislative Building, as a massive Christmas tree lights the rotunda. KIM JAY/FOR METRO

Saskatchewan Christmases fondly recalled

Writer Kathy Ullyott captures the prairie magic of family and home during the holidays
PAGE 4

Looking for a New Year's Eve to remember?

Check out our suggestions, from kid-friendly to low-key to full-on party mode PAGE 4

The mayor looks ahead at Queen City's future

Fougere talks growth, investment and dealing with difficult issues; and he shares a holiday message
PAGE 3

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Mayor Michael Fougere works at his desk in his office atop city hall. JEFF MACKEY/METRO

MICHAEL FOUGERE

The mayor of Regina says he is focused on the city's fundamentals and its future

JEFF MACKEY
jeff.mackey@metronews.ca

Mayor Michael Fougere has been at the helm of Regina for almost two months now and he will be leading the Queen City through what may prove to be a very transformative period in its history.

Confronting Fougere are a handful of large civic projects, including the new stadium, a less experienced city council and a housing shortage.

"When you look around the landscape of the city you see housing being built, you see businesses being built and new people moving in here all the time, so we are doing well here and I hope to see the same thing in 2013," said Fougere.

Fougere warned that all this growth and investment needs be orderly for Regina to truly benefit; and this means some difficult issues need to be addressed.

"For me the primary concern is dealing with the very low vacancy rate here in Regina," said Fougere. "Affordable housing, below market housing and social housing are issues that we have to deal with right away."

The new year will also see Regina host some major national events, including the Junos and the Grey Cup.

"It gives us a chance to showcase our city, who we are as a people and how well we can put on these great events," said Fougere. "We expect the entire city to be behind the Junos and the Grey Cup."

In the shorter term Fougere had a message for the people of Regina.

"I would certainly want to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy holidays," said Fougere. "It is a time for being with family and enjoying yourself and I would like to wish everyone all the best in 2013."

Eggnog sales give milk producers a holiday boost

With the holidays right around the corner, Canadians are sipping on their favourite seasonal drink and for many that's eggnog, but some dairy producers say for them eggnog helps deal with the decline of milk drinkers over the holiday months.

Andrew Taylor, the plant manager with Hewitt's Dairy in Hagersville, Ont., said they see an increase of 10 to 15 per cent in sales and he says eggnog is the beverage behind the jump.

"Any increase in sales we look forward to, but we plan for it every year," said Taylor. "People look forward to it."

Taylor explained they usually see the increase from the beginning of December until early January.

"Overall milk sales tend to fall in December as people tend to drink other things, usually an alcoholic beverage, so anything that compensates for that is something that we look forward to," he said. "We rely on it, farmers need a consistent market and it helps to maintain that consistency."

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON WITH FILES FROM JANE CAULFIELD

Eggnog's backstory

- Believed to have its origins in England, it was a popular beverage among the aristocracy because it was expensive. One theory about where the word came from is that "nog" is actually short for "noggin" — a small, wooden mug.
- In the Americas, colonists mixed theirs with rum.

Some dairy farmers say an increased demand for eggnog helps compensate for a slump in milk sales over the holidays.

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How the holidays bring you home

'Tis the season. Saskatchewan Christmases still resonate years later

KATHY ULLYOTT
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One late night in December, when I was 25, a couple of years after I'd moved from Saskatchewan to Toronto, my parents picked me up at the Regina airport for the two-hour drive home for Christmas. It was typically sub-sub-zero as we counted off the rhinestone string of heroically named villages on the familiar route north — Holdfast, Liberty, Stalwart, Imperial.

Then, in the distance off to the left, a cluster slowly brightened to glow a welcome: The Christmas lights of an isolated farm, as blue as lapis lazuli under an impossibly vast and velvet sky.

What is it about the Christmas season, now as much a secular holiday as a religious one, that makes its memories so intense and indelible? Maybe it's that it engages so many senses — the sounds of familiar carols, the tastes of fruitcake and gingerbread, the brilliance of store windows at nightfall.

Maybe the winter solstice really is a time, as the ancient Celts and other cultures believed, when the veil between our world and that of the spirits thins, giving us a glimpse of our place in eternity.

Or maybe it's that the universal pause at the top of the year invites reflection and taking stock, just as it inspires compassion and generosity. In that breath, TV specials from your childhood, your own child's eyes on her first Christmas morning and shining moments with loved ones now gone all seem to pack themselves into a parcel of memories as dense, compact and vivid as a deck of cards.

Quoted

"What is it about the Christmas season ... that makes its memories so intense and indelible? Maybe it's that it engages so many senses — the sounds of familiar carols, the tastes of fruitcake and gingerbread, the brilliance of store windows."

I don't go home to Saskatchewan for Christmas every year now. The top of the year has become busy; my own children are starting to scatter; flights for four during the holidays are expensive.

But from the crowded aisles of a big-box home store this week, a faint Good King Wenceslas took me, suddenly, back to a Grade 4 Christmas concert, jostling with 23 other excited children as we waited behind a closed stage curtain for our turn to sing.

As my family unpacked tree ornaments from their nests of tissue, I lifted a sprig of ripe durum wheat that I brought from my dad's farm two decades ago and have placed on our Christmas tree every year since. Instead of Christmas, though, it brought back dusty golden harvests, with their long, molten sunsets and flocks of ducks flapping noisily up from the cut swaths.

This week in Toronto, it is 8 C and slightly damp — not at all like Christmases I remember. I am working in my third-floor home office, scrambling to bundle two weeks' worth of work into this one. Across the street, my neighbour is rigging a string of Christmas lights around his porch. His little daughter stamps in puddles; jacketless teenage boys shout and scramble in a game of street hockey.

My husband returns from a meeting; he has stopped to do a bit of shopping on the way home. My daughter dashes in and changes for her after-school job; I yell at her to remember to give me her Santa list.

My neighbour finishes up across the way and begins taking down his stepladder just as the sky begins to thicken into dusk. Night falls. He switches on his string of lights and they burst into tiny twinkling tongues of lapis-blue fire. Crowded chimney silhouettes disappear against the dark, and the clattering hockey sticks sift into dry tongues of snow licking across a prairie highway. It is Christmas.

5 ways to kick off 2013

Looking for ideas for how to spend New Year's Eve? Make it a night to remember with these options.

ALYSSA MCDONALD
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1 Noon's Year's Eve

Early bedtime for the kids? No problem. The family can celebrate the new year at noon at the Saskatchewan Science Centre, which will be featuring face painting, snowshoeing and wall climbing, among other things.

2 Fun and free local music

O'Hanlon's Pub will be offering free cover all night long, starting with celebrity karaoke at 8 p.m., continuing with local bands Indigo Joseph and Fur Eel, and finishing the night with a DJ.

3 The non-New Year's

If you're not in the mood for the typical New Year's Eve party, then go to one that does not celebrate at all. There are no bands, noisemakers or cover charge at Bushwakker Brewpub.

4 Went for one, Stayed Til Two

Canadian country star Gord Bamford will be playing the Casino Regina Show Lounge right before the clock hits midnight.

5 The golden era

The Owl will be celebrating the survival of "the old earth" and bringing in the new year as a new era with a custom DJ stage and dancers.

'Tis the season to be saving.

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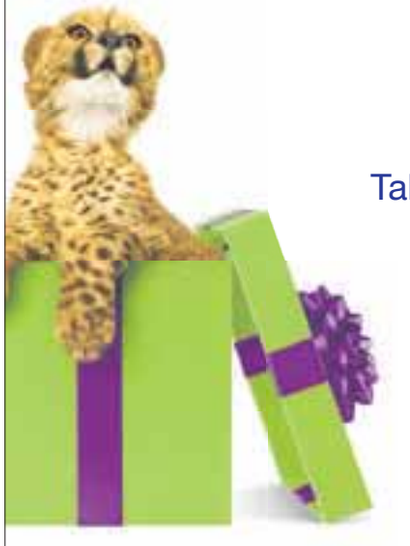

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Balancing charter rights.

Supreme Court split on freedom to testify in veil

A sharply divided Supreme Court of Canada was not able to definitively rule Thursday whether a woman can wear a religious veil known as a niqab while testifying in court.

In a rare 4-2-1 split decision, the Supreme Court ruled that a witness can cover their face in certain circumstances.

The case pitted two protections in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms against each other — religious freedom versus an accused person's right to a fair trial.

In the end, a slim majority decided essentially not to favour one over the other. The court affirmed the importance of both rights.

The practical effect of that decision was to pass the case back to an Ontario trial judge that had just begun a preliminary hearing.

In this case, a Muslim woman sought to wear a niqab while testifying against two men she claims sexually assaulted her when she was a child.

The two men claim the Charter allows them to confront their accuser and observe her facial expressions as she testifies. Due to a publication ban, the woman can only be identified as N.S.

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin wrote for the majority and affirmed the two Charter rights, saying both should receive the fullest possible expression.

A sharply divided Supreme Court of Canada was not able to definitively rule Thursday whether a woman can wear a religious veil known as a niqab while testifying in court.

MAYA ALLERUZZO/THE CANADIAN PRESS

McLachlin spelled out a four-step analysis that the judge at N.S.'s preliminary hearing can now use to determine the issue. The ruling will also be a precedent in other cases.

"The judge must assess all these factors and determine whether, in the case at hand, the salutary effects of requiring the witness to remove the niqab outweigh the deleterious effects of doing so."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Increased flu cases

Sick? Stay home for the holidays

Health officials say flu activity seems to be surging just in time for the holidays in several parts of the country.

They are suggesting that people who haven't received a flu shot can still get one.

And they are urging people who are sick not to visit elderly relatives or attend holiday gatherings.

Infectious diseases expert Dr. Michael Gardam says taking part in holiday social events when you are sick is being unfair to others who attend.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Female circumcision

UN calls for global genital mutilation ban

The UN General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution Thursday calling for a global ban on female genital mutilation, a centuries-old practice stemming from the belief that circumcising girls controls women's sexuality and enhances fertility. It has also been linked to religious and cultural practices, although Muslim and Christian leaders have spoken out against it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Slain teacher protected students from gunman

Mourners exit a church in Katonah, N.Y., after the funeral for Anne Marie Murphy on Thursday. Murphy was killed when Adam Lanza walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., Dec. 14, and opened fire.

LINDSAY NIEGELBERG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sandy Hook shooting.

52-year-old one of six educators killed in Newtown massacre

A teacher who authorities said died trying to protect her students in the Connecticut school shooting that left 28 people dead was laid to rest Thursday.

Anne Marie Murphy, 52, was remembered as a teacher who "brought together a community, a nation, a world, now awed by her own life and death," in a eulogy by Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York.

Murphy's father, Hugh McGowan, said authorities told him that she died trying to protect her young pupils.

Archbishop

"Annie's life and death brings light, truth ... and love to a world often shrouded in darkness ..."

Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York

Her body was found covering a group of children's bodies as if to shield them, McGowan said.

About 15 people arrived at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Katonah, N.Y., in a yellow school bus with "Newtown," the name of the Connecticut town where the shooting occurred, written on its side. The church quickly filled and about 100 mourners waited outside.

A Justice Department official said the country's top lawyer, Attorney General Eric Holder, would visit the town Thursday to meet privately with first responders and law enforcement officials.

At least nine funerals and wakes were held Wednesday for those who died when 20-year-old gunman Adam Lanza, armed with a military-style assault rifle, broke into Sandy Hook Elementary School and opened fire. He killed six adults and 20 children, all of them six or seven years old.

More tributes were scheduled for Friday and Saturday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Snowstorm in U.S. Midwest leaves travellers stranded

The first widespread snowstorm of the season plodded across the Midwest on Thursday, as whiteout conditions sent drivers sliding over slick roads and some travellers were forced to scramble for alternate ways to get to their holiday destinations.

The storm, which dumped a foot of snow in parts of Iowa and Wisconsin, was part of a system that began in the Rockies earlier in the week before trekking into the Midwest. It was expected to move across the Great Lakes overnight before moving into Canada.

The storm led airlines to cancel about 1,000 flights ahead of the Christmas holiday — relatively few compared to past big storms, though the number was climbing.

Most of the cancelled flights were at Chicago's O'Hare and Midway international airports. At O'Hare, many people were taking the cancellations in stride and the normally busy airport was much quieter than normal Thursday evening.

Aprielle Kugler said she was considering taking a bus to Des Moines on Friday morning to visit her boyfriend after she had two flights cancelled out of O'Hare. Sitting on top of her luggage, the 18-year-old from Wisconsin said her mom shovelled more than a foot of snow out of the family's driveway that morning to drive her to Chicago for her flight.

Fatalities

- Along with Thursday's fatal accident in Iowa, the storm was blamed for traffic deaths in Nebraska, Kansas and Wisconsin.
- In southeastern Utah, a woman who tried to walk for help after her car became stuck in snow died Tuesday night.

The storm made travel difficult from Kansas to Wisconsin, forcing road closures.

In Iowa, two people were killed and seven injured in a 25-vehicle pileup. Drivers were blinded by blowing snow and didn't see vehicles that had slowed or stopped on Interstate 35, about 60 miles north of Des Moines, state police said. A chain reaction of crashes involving semitrailers and passenger cars closed down a section of the highway.

"It's time to listen to warnings and get off the road," said Iowa State Patrol Col. David Garrison. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Y kant Canaydians spel? Blame it on the Internet

Disappearing skills. Digital life is ruining our ability to do basic tasks such as spell properly, recall phone numbers and write by hand

Canadians may be among the world's most prolific Internet users, but it seems all that time online hasn't made us a nation of careful spellers.

Many of us often type "facebok" into Google and rather than correcting the obvious mistake, let the search engine fix it. Monitoring Canadians' search habits would reveal that many, many more consistently type in "faceboo," "faebook" and "fcaebook" — but they know Google will get the point.

Others can't be bothered to tap out even eight characters and have learned that entering just "face" or "fb" will get them exactly the link they need. Is that lazy or efficient? Should we thank Google's engineers for saving us a few seconds or lament that technology is dooming us to intellectual laziness? It seems hardly anyone can remember phone numbers anymore since we starting storing them in our mobile phones.

Outside of schools and some workplaces, the practice of putting pen to paper is becoming increasingly rare. To many, scribbling with a pen feels quaint in today's digital age. And who needs maps and a sense of direction with GPS technology to guide the way? THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"When you're typing ... you don't have to think — (and autocorrect) thinks for you. So I was like, 'Wow, I'm really scary now when I don't have Google or spellcheck to help me out.'"

Matthew Thomas, 33

A woman types while surfing the Internet in North Vancouver on Wednesday. Our continued reliance on technology means we're no longer very good at undertaking manual, old-fashioned tasks. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wireless industry. Data use fuels revenue growth

Here's my cell number. Call me, maybe? Or maybe not. Cellphone users are doing less calling as they buy more smartphones and use the device for texting, emailing, web surfing, mobile apps, social networking and watching videos.

And it's that surge in data use that Canada's telecom companies — big and small — are banking on as the revenue driver of the future.

"It's no longer just your teenage kids. It's everybody," telecom analyst Brahm Eiley said. "They use their phone the way they would use their PC," he added.

Dan Maitland has an iPhone and hardly uses it for calls. "These are not just phones," said Maitland, 39, who makes software that helps train pilots to be safer at flight simulator company CAE Inc. in Montreal.

"They are small computers that have the ability to make a phone call."

Maitland said he uses his iPhone for such things as web searches, apps, accessing files for work and reading.

And Maitland is doing exactly what wireless providers expect and want him to do to help increase their data revenues in the years ahead.

Faster wireless networks are also helping drive the increasing use of data by consumers, Eiley added. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 101.29¢ (+0.09¢)

TSX 12,388.71 (-14.92)

OIL $90.13 US (+15¢)

GOLD $1,645.90 US (-$21.80)

Natural gas: $3.46 US (+14¢)
Dow Jones: 13,311.72 (+59.75)

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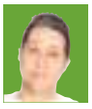


THE LIST
Mike Benhaim
metronews.ca

1 **Say what?** South African President Jacob Zuma maintains leadership of the currently-ruling African National Congress party by defeating deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe with a dubious 75 per cent majority vote. Perhaps it's just that the robocalls had trouble pronouncing the name Kgalema Motlanthe.

2 **Slap-happy.** Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh have created a sophisticated prosthetic arm that can translate brain signals into the appropriate movements. While a definite boon for the physically challenged, I raise two concerns: You just know some rich guy is eventually going to buy a couple of extra arms for no good reason, and someone having a bad dream will end up slapping the heck out of their bed-partner.

3 **Holy crepes.** After a huge manhunt, Quebec police have arrested more than a dozen accused assailants in what will one day be known as The Great Maple Syrup Heist of 2012. Officers also recovered important paraphernalia used in the production of maple syrup, and around $18 million worth of our nation's most delicious natural resource (I believe that's street value). The province has been dealing with controversies over corruption and organized crime, but they'll be damned if they are going to sit by and let citizens endure Christmas with dry, unsavoury pancakes.

4 **Bac off.** Dollarama has pulled two brands of cleansing wipes from its shelves after tests by CBC News revealed unacceptable levels of bacteria. It's reassuring to know that all of the other products we use to rid our skin of impurities contain "acceptable" levels of bacteria.

5 **Kill me maybe?** The votes are in, and Carly Rae Jepsen's Call Me Maybe is the song of the year. While I am pleased for our homegirl, after the millionth listen I respectfully request, for the love of God, that someone call this girl already!

6 **Fields of dreams.** The Toronto Raptors welcomed back Landry Fields, who was cleared by team doctors after undergoing elbow surgery over a month ago. The team is on a four-game winning streak, and Fields is anxious to jump in and get them back to their comfort zone.

7 **Winter wonders.** Monkeys shopping, eagles snatching babies, cows falling from trucks ... It brings to mind fond memories of something my mother used to say: "If your flying baby cries over a truckload of spilled cows, no one's ever going to buy your sharp-dressed monkey." In fairness, English was not her first language.

8 **And the winner is ...** Cassadee Pope. Pope is now officially The Voice. Fans voted for The Personality as well, but to me she'll always be The Legs. Congrats Cassadee.

9 **My favourite things.** This week in 1985, Born in the U.S.A. by Bruce Springsteen surpassed Michael Jackson's Thriller as the second-longest-lasting album on Billboard's American Top 10. It stayed there for 79 weeks. So what mega-singing sensation was powerful enough to top these two superstars for the honour of being No. 1? At 109 consecutive weeks ... Julie Andrews with The Sound of Music. Of course it was.

Follow The Metro List on Twitter @TheMetroList

Julie Andrews' The Sound of Music topped Bruce Springsteen's Born in the U.S.A. and Michael Jackson's Thriller on Billboard's Top 10 in 1985. CONTRIBUTED

May your days be merry and bright

MATT YORK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christmas circuit

Don't get blinded by the lights

A woman walks along Natal Circle viewing Christmas lights in Gilbert, Ariz., in this photo taken earlier this month.

As Christmas decorations light up across the globe, take these precautions to avoid a holiday mishap.

• **Sparkle without the spark.** Turn off the electricity to the supply outlet before working with outdoor wiring. Unplug light strings before replacing bulbs and check to ensure replacement bulbs match the voltage and wattage of the original. To avoid a shock from damaged wire, use insulated fasteners rather than metal nails or tacks to hold light strings in place.

• **Stay dry.** Keep electrical connectors for outdoor lights above ground, out of water, and away from metal eavestroughs. Connect outdoor lighting into receptacles protected by weatherproof ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). These can provide protection from electric shock by sensing ground leakage and cutting electrical power.

• **Put your faith in the magic of the holidays but don't fall for fakes.** Avoid counterfeit electronic decorations that haven't been certified for safe use. Look for the mark from an accredited certification organization like CSA Group.

NEWS CANADA

Pales in comparison

Neighbour cops out on lights

An Arizona woman who knew she couldn't compete head-on with her neighbour's elaborate Christmas light display is attracting attention for her response.

Using red and green lights, Kristina Green of Maricopa, Ariz., spelled out the word "ditto" and made an arrow pointing toward her neighbour's home.

KNXV-TV reports that Green's display is made of around 600 lights. Her neighbour's setup has about 16,000 colourful lights. Green has created a Facebook page for her "ditto" sign.

The Christmas light competition heats up for some neighbourhoods, while other neighbours go with a "ditto" sign and an arrow. SCREEN GRAB

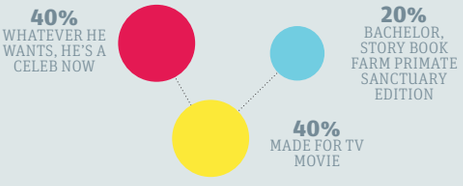
Last year, a family in Beaverton, Ore., also erected the word "ditto" with an arrow on the side of their own home toward a neighbour's house as part of an online movement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metropolitan Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

What's next for the Ikea monkey?



Twitter

@4CallingLakes: #winterwonderland It was a stunning drive from #Regina to #FQ this morning. I am ready to embrace #ChristmasintheValley

@V_Mulholland: #yqr Thirty below, but I swear the trees on our street are stunning. Hoar frost, snow and morning light.(Ok, I talked myself into going out)

@mavisnichols: It's sofa king cold waiting for the bus in #yqr.

@22Fresh: What are you doing with your last 24 hours on planet earth? ... Besides adding bacon and gravy to all 3 main courses.

@LeConstable: I might not have time to watch Elf before Xmas... This is a problem...

metro

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SCENE 2

This is 40 sees Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann reprise their roles as the warring couple in Knocked Up. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

This is all too familiar

Biting honesty.

Judd Apatow's latest comedy pleases with its realistic take on life in middle age

Richard: Mark, after writing that synopsis, I feel it necessary to remind everyone that this is a comedy, so mixed into this study of midlife disappointment are some keenly honed and very funny observations. It's a blend of heart and humour, frequently in the same scene, and often in the same sentence. When Pete says to Debbie, "We're like Simon and Garfunkle and you turned me into Garfunkle," it's a funny line, delivered well, but also a loaded one that places his unhappiness front and centre. It's that kind of writing and performance that makes you laugh and cringe at the same time. What did you think?

Mark: It's Apatow's best movie, but not necessarily his funniest. The comedy comes intermittently in between stretches of a married couple bickering, experiencing a financial meltdown, problems with their kids and their parents. Just like real life. But I'm not sure the very funny comedy bits redeem the rest of the movie's grim and lacerating honesty.

RC: I think Apatow is trying to get that James Brooks magical mix of funny and raw emotion. The ratio might be a bit off here, but his cast — Rudd and Mann — both bring considerable likeability and comic chops, but temper that with resentment and dissatisfaction. Mann is particularly good. A scene with a hockey player who doesn't realize she is married is funny but framed with a kind of vulnerability that elevates Debbie from stock character to believable person.

MB: I found this movie less sentimental than most of Brooks' work, but the cast does make the bitter pill seem a bit sweeter. Not just Rudd and Mann, but the smaller parts — Albert Brooks and John Lithgow as their respective fathers, Jason Segel as the insufferable personal trainer and Apatow's own daughters as the couple's siblings, all work wonders. And two comic set pieces late in the movie — when most directors would be sprinting to the finish line — one with Charlene Yi, the other with Melissa McCarthy — are comedy gold. Your favourite funny bit?

RC: I loved everything to do with the Graham Parker storyline. As the retro rock act Rudd's character is trying to promote, Parker — who was one of my 1970s real-life punk rock heroes — gamely allows himself to be the butt of a lot of jokes, including my favourite from Chris O'Dowd, who says, "It's hard to watch a band when you know all of them were alive on D Day."

MB: Casting Parker was such an inspired choice! I hope that life will imitate art and people will get interested in his music again. But the movie is full of such inspired offbeat picks. That was Tatum O'Neal as the realtor and radio talkshow hero Phil Hendrie who attacks Rudd after the bicycle crash.

Synopsis

This is 40 takes place in the week between Pete and Debbie's (Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann reprising their roles from Knocked Up) 40th birthdays. Although Debbie lies about how old she is, larger problems include constantly warring kids (Maude and Iris Apatow), an empty bank account made worse by a freeloading father (Albert Brooks), an embezzling employee and relationship doubts triggered by Debbie's loaded question, "If I hadn't gotten pregnant 14 years ago, would we still be together?"

- Richard: ●●●●○
- Mark: ●●●●○

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Action

Django Unchained

Director. Quentin Tarantino

Stars. Jamie Foxx, Christoph Waltz

Whatever you think of Quentin Tarantino, his movies stand out in an industry full of mediocrity. Django Unchained, the filmmaker's homage to the spaghetti western, is certainly no different — casting Jamie Foxx as the titular slave-turned-bounty hunter. Aided by a smooth-talking "dentist" (Waltz), Django strives to save his wife from a plantation owner played by Leonardo Dicaprio. Hypnotic dialogue and Tarantino's sense of retro-style keep Django smartly entertaining, albeit a bit long at 165 minutes. **STEVE GOW**

Action

Jack Reacher

Director. Christopher McQuarrie

Stars. Tom Cruise, Rosamund Pike

Tom Cruise channels the macho swagger of John Wayne and Robert Mitchum in this refreshingly unpretentious, highly entertaining mystery thriller. Cruise plays an ex-military cop who is called in to aid defense lawyer Rosamund Pike in profiling another soldier who has murdered five civilians. Of course there's more to the serpentine case than meets the eye. Jack Reacher gets an extra star for casting cult German director Werner Herzog as a reptilian psychopath.
CHRIS ALEXANDER

Drama

Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away

Director. Andrew Adamson

Stars. Erica Linz, Igor Zaripov

The problem with making a Cirque du Soleil movie is that the company's acrobatic shows are more spectacle than the medium of cinema allows. Worlds Away tries to thread a narrative throughout, but even that's lost among the thrilling stunts.
STEVE GOW

Musical

Les Misérables

Director. Tom Hooper

Stars. Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway

Based on the stage play, this brooding musical stars Jackman. There's no denying the grandiosity of staging and the actors' live vocals leads to impressive performances, but the one-takes get wearisome. **STEVE GOW**

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 21 TO THURS., DEC. 27. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

Southland Mall 3025 Gordon Rd.

Flight (14A) Fri 7:05-10:05 Sat-Sun 1:20-4:10-7:05-10:05 Mon 1:20-4:10-7:05 Tue-Thu 9:55
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri 8:10-10:40 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:10-5:40-8:10-10:40 Mon 12:30-3:10-5:40-8:10 Tue 5:30-8-11 Wed-Thu 12:30-3-5:30-8-11
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri 6-9:45 Sat-Sun 2:15-6-9:45 Mon 2:15-6 Tue 6-9:45 Wed-Thu 2:15-6-9:45
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri 6:45-10:20 Sat-Sun 3-6:45-10:20 Mon 3-6:45 Tue 6:45-10:25 Wed-Thu 3-6:45-10:25
Lincoln (PG) Fri 7:10-10:15 Sat-Sun 3:50-7:10-10:15 Mon 3:50-7:10 Tue-Thu 3:50-7:20-10:40
Les Misérables (PG) Tue 3:20-6:50-10:20 Wed-Thu 3:10-6:50-10:20
Parental Guidance (G) Tue 5:20-8:10-10:50 Wed-Thu 2:40-5:20-8:10-10:50
Playing for Keeps (PG) Fri 7:50-10:45 Sat-Sun 1:50-4:45-7:50-10:45 Mon 1:50-4:45-7:50
Rise of the Guardians (G) Fri 7:15-9:50 Sat-Sun 2:05-4:50-7:15-9:50 Mon 2:05-4:50-7:15 Tue 4:45-7:10 Wed-Thu 2:05-4:45-7:10
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri 6:50-9:35 Sat-Sun 1:05-4:10-6:50-9:35 Mon 1:05-4:10-6:50 Tue 4:20-7:40-10:35 Wed-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:40-10:35
Skyfall (PG) Fri 6:55-10 Sat-Sun 12:40-3:45-6:55-10 Mon 12:40-3:45-6:55 Tue 3:45-7-10:10 Wed-Thu 12:40-3:45-7-10:10
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (14A) Fri 7:25-10:30 Sat-Sun 1:40-4:35-7:25-10:30 Mon 1:40-4:35-7:25 Tue 4:35-7:30-10:05 Wed-Thu 1:40-4:35-7:30-10:05
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Sat-Mon 12:50 Wed-Thu 1

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Django Unchained (14A) Tue-Thu 11:35-3:20-6:55-10:45
Elf (G) Sat 11
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri 4:15-5:15-8-9 Sat-Sun 12:30-1:30-4:15-5:15-8-9 Mon 12:30-1:30-4:05-5:15-7:40 Tue-Thu 2:30-6:15-10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri-Sun 3-6:45-10:25 Mon 3-6:45 Tue-Thu 3:05-6:45-10:25 Fri 6:15-10 Sat 11-12-2:30-6:15-10 Sun 12-2:30-6:15-10 Mon 12-2:30-6:15 Tue-Thu 12-12:30-4:15-8 , Jack Reacher (PG) Fri 3:10-4:30-7:35-10:40 Sat-Sun 1:20-4:30-7:35-10:40 Mon 1:20-4:30-7:35 Tue-Thu 1:20-4:20-7:30-10:30
Life of Pi 3D (G) Fri 3:50-7-10:10 Sat-Sun 12:10-3:50-7-10:10 Mon 12:10-3:50-7 Tue-Thu 12:15-4-7:05-9:55
Les Misérables (PG) Tue-Thu 11:30-3:10-6:40-10:10
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Fri 4:50-7:20-9:50 Sat-Sun 11:50-2:20-4:50-7:20-9:50 Mon 11:50-2:20-4:50-7:20 Tue-Thu 11:45-2:20-4:50-7:20-9:50
Parental Guidance (G) Tue-Thu 11:50-2:40-5:20-8:05-10:40
Rise of the Guardians (G) Tue-Thu 12:05 Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Fri 5 Sat 4:05 Sun-Mon 12:15-2:40-5
Royal Opera House: The Nutcracker (STC) Sat 12:55
Skyfall (PG) Fri-Sun 7:40-10:45 Mon 7:25
This Is 40 (14A) Fri 4-7:10-10:20 Sat-Sun 1-4-7:10-10:20 Mon 1-4-7:10 Tue-Thu 1-4:05-7:15-10:15
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (14A) Fri 4:10-6:50-9:45 Sat-Sun 1:25-4:10-6:50-9:45 Mon 1:25-4:10-6:50

Kramer IMAX Theatre 2903 Powerhouse Dr.

The Dark Knight Rises: The IMAX Experience (PG) Fri 8:15 Sat-Sun 3-8:15 Wed 1:45 Thu 8:15
No Films Showing Today (STC) Tue
Santa vs. The Snowman 3D (STC) Fri 12:30-3-7 Sat-Sun 12:30-7 Mon 12:30 Thu 12:30-3-7 , Sea Rex: Journey to a Prehistoric World 3D (STC) Fri 1:45-4:15 Sat-Mon 1:45 Wed 12:30 Thu 1:45-4:15

Paradise Cinema 1011 N. Devonshire Dr.

Hotel Transylvania (G) Fri 6:50 Sat-Sun 1:10-4-6:50 Mon 1-4
No Films Showing Today (STC) Tue
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri-Sun 9:20
Skyfall (PG) Wed-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:45-9:20
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Sun 1:30-3:50-7-9:30 Mon 1:30-3:50 Wed-Thu 1:30-3:50-7-9:30

Golden Mile, 3806 Albert St.

Argo (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:45-6:30-9:30
Brave (G) Fri-Thu 1:25-4
Here Comes the Boom (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:35-9:20
Hotel Transylvania (G) Fri 3:50-6:55-9:35 Sat-Thu 1:35-3:50-6:55-9:35
Ice Age: Continental Drift (G) Fri-Thu 1:30-3:50
Killing Them Softly (14A) Fri-Thu 6:50-9:45
Looper (14A) Fri 6:45-9:25 Sat 9:25 Sun-Thu 6:45-9:25
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri 3:50-6:40-9:40 Sat 1:20-3:50-9:40 Sun-Thu 1:20-3:50-6:40-9:40
Red Dawn (PG) Fri-Thu 1:40-4-7-9:50
Taken 2 (PG) Fri-Thu 1:45-4:05-7:05-9:55

Regina Public Library Film Theatre, 23 11 12th Ave.

Celeste and Jesse Forever (14A) Thu 9:30
The Master (14A) Thu 7
Midnight's Children (PG) Fri 7 Sat 9 Sun 7
No Films Showing Today (STC) Mon-Wed
Samsara (G) Fri 9:30 Sat 7 Sun 9:30

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson

Stewart and Pattinson host Christmas party

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson are reportedly getting pretty domestic, even going so far as to host a small Christmas party for their friends, according to Hollywood Life. "Kristen and Rob had a small, intimate Christmas tree decorating party on Sunday. They have a gorgeous tree set up at Kristen's, where Rob pretty much lives now," a source says. "They are not living with each other, but they are spending plenty of time with each other and they do sleep over often. They are in a really magical place right now despite some lingering trust issues on Rob's side."

The Word

The weirdest celebrity hookups of 2012

THE WORD
Dorothy Robinson
scene@metronews.ca

Rosario Dawson and Danny Boyle

A 22-year age difference hasn't stopped director Danny Boyle and actress Rosario Dawson from "canoodling" all over London, per the brilliant and descriptive London press. The May/December romance apparently bloomed on the set of their new movie Trance. Was it the Olympics' bizarre opening ceremony that took Dawson's heart?

Simon Cowell and Carmen Electra

The rumours are kind of true: "She's not my girlfriend," Cowell, 53, explained when he called in to On Air with Ryan Seacrest yesterday about the rumours between the two stars. "We're people who date." How very "bro" of you, Simon.

Avril Lavigne and Chad Kroeger

To the surprise of most, the singers got engaged this year after quietly dating for six months, Lavigne's rep confirmed to People magazine. "A romantic relationship blossomed as they spent time writing together," the rep says. This will be the Canadian singer's second marriage after splitting from Sum 41 frontman Deryck Whibley in 2009. Kroeger "makes her so happy," a source tells the magazine. "Both of their families could not be more excited."

Bobbi Kristina Brown and her "adopted brother"

It was announced on the reality show, The Houstons: On Our Own that Bobbi Kristina Brown and Nick Gordon, who lived with Whitney Houston from the time he was 12, are indeed engaged. Of course, Gordon was never officially adopted by Houston and he isn't blood-related to Bobbi Kristina, but the pseudo-siblings have referred to each other as "brother" and "sister," which, you know, gives us the willies.

Johnny Depp

She's just not that into you

Newly single Johnny Depp is reportedly hung up on his Rum Diary co-star, Amber Heard.

The only problem is the feeling isn't exactly mutual, according to Radar Online. "Johnny and Amber have been having a lot of fun spending time with one another, but Amber keeps telling him she's not interested in being with him in a monogamous relationship," a source says.

"She says she feels she's too young for him, but the main factor is Amber prefers dating women over men and has no interest in committing to a guy — even if he is Johnny Depp."

Twitter

@JuddApatow
Five percent battery left on my iPhone. I shall tweet till it runs out of gas. So nervous about the release of the movie. Sleep? Ha!

@Sethrogen
Normally, talk shows are very scripted. Tonight, Letterman didn't ask me any of the pre determined questions. It was terrifying.

Something's not right, Down There.

Start the conversation
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Claire Danes

Claire Danes welcomes baby Cyrus

Homeland star Claire Danes and husband Hugh Dancy welcomed their first child, a son, this week, her rep confirms to People magazine. Cyrus Christopher Dancy was born Monday "exactly at 3 p.m.," Dancy reportedly told friends and family in an email, according to Page Six. "Mother and baby are well, healthy and happy." Danes and Dancy first met filming Evening in 2006 and married in 2009.

Santa's cookies 2.0

Chocolate Shortbread Melt-Aways

This recipe makes five dozen small cookies. DAN CLAPSON

These cookies have a chocolate intensity that balances with their buttery richness, and when piped onto a baking tray, they look like chocolate kisses. They are a good addition to a holiday cookie tin.

- 1 cup (250 ml) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 cup (250 ml) icing sugar, sifted
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml salt)

1. Preheat the oven to 325 F (160 C) and line 2 baking trays with parchment paper.

2. Cream the butter and icing sugar together until smooth. Beat in the vanilla extract.

3. Add the flour, cocoa, cornstarch, and salt, and beat until evenly incorporated.

4. Spoon the soft cookie dough into a piping bag fitted with a large plain tip, and pipe 1-inch (2.5 cm) "kisses" onto the baking trays, leaving a 2-inch (5 cm) space between the cookies.

5. Bake the cookies for 12 to 14 minutes, until they lift away from the parchment paper without sticking. Let the cookies cool completely on the tray before removing. The cookies will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 days. **FROM ANNA OLSON'S BACK TO BAKING**

Holiday baking. As the undisputed queen of sweets, Anna Olson knows a thing or two about delicious treats

DAN CLAPSON
life@metronews.ca

Whether it's gingerbread, yule logs or some shortbread, with the holiday season comes the sweet smell of desserts in the air.

Food Network personality Anna Olson took some time out of her busy baking schedule to chat about what she's whipping up for the holidays. And, no surprise, she is as sweet as sugar!

What's the first memory you have of baking over the holidays?
Making Cherry Walnut Icebox cookies with my grandma.

I still make these cookies each year. It's not Christmas without them.

Do you and your family have any Christmas traditions when it comes to the baking?
My mom and I book a day each year to bake our family recipes as well as make perogies.

Then we go out for dinner to toast our accomplishment — and so we don't have to do any more dishes!

Fruitcake always gets a bad rap. Where do people go wrong with it?
I think people don't think you can alter the fruit and nut combination, but you have a great deal of flexibility.

So long as the total measurement of fruit and nuts is the same, feel free to switch out the candied peel for dried cherries or cranberries, or replace the prunes with figs!

Anna Olson. SUBMITTED

Any tips to ensure a sturdy gingerbread house that will stand the test of time and also small hands picking candy off of it?
For a gingerbread house that needs to remain intact for more than a week, then it really shouldn't be made to be eaten. In this case, use vegetable shortening instead of butter in the cookie dough. For an icing that holds up well, use a recipe that calls for meringue powder. It sets up firmly but it's also easy to work with when soft.

A Christmas cookie can take many shapes and forms. What is your go-to variety?
Other than my Grandma's Cherry Walnut cookies, I must have my Toblerone Shortbread onhand the entire month of December.

Your love for baking and sweets is undeniable, but is there one thing you don't like to whip up in your kitchen?
I've never really clicked with rum balls. I always pass them over if they are on a cookie platter and I don't make them at home.

Last, but perhaps most important, do you leave milk and cookies out for Santa on Christmas Eve?
You bet! I need to stay on the nice list!

Liquid Assets

White wines for zombies with Santa hats?

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

I write this column assuming the world hasn't ended today. If I'm wrong, here are some red wine suggestions to match with turkey for all you roaming hordes of zombies who may or may not have taken over the earth.

One of the wine world's most heinous old wives' tales is that white wines only go with white meats and red wines only go with red meats. If something has to end today, please let it be that thick slice of baloney.

You have to think about more than the star of the meal when it comes to a liquid pairing. Considering all the side dishes means a meal featuring the grand gobbler can cast a wide net catching many red wines.

For some outside the box drinking, think a mid-priced Italian Chianti, a robust Rioja from Spain or a fresh flavoured merlot from California, Australia or Chile.

As a long time pinot-file, I tend to crave a fruit-forward pinot noir when carving. New Zealand knows its way around the grape and the 2011 Oyster Bay Pinot Noir ($19.95 - $24.99) oozes ample very berry fruit that should appeal to all of your table mates, whether alive ... or living dead.

Happy holidays!

PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.

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This holiday, entertain like Martha

Martha Stewart. She doesn't do appetizers, won't serve red wine and — surprise! — sends email invites.

TINA CHADHA
Metro World News in New York

Dream of hosting epic get-togethers that will spread like wildfire on Instagram and Pinterest, but have yet to organize something more involved than cheese and crackers?

You, aspiring hostess, need a thought-out game plan, so we checked in with domestic powerhouse Martha Stewart (consider it an early Christmas present).

Start with the right company

"The first thing I do is create my guest list. I have a basic list of my friends and then people who I've added to it throughout the year. I send out a save-the-date. Then I send out an email invitation — but it's embedded in my email so it opens immediately. You don't have to go clicking here and clicking there. It's very important to me. I don't click on an envelope that opens up. Right click here and download pictures — I don't go for that stuff."

Plan your menu

"Next I start on the menu. What do I really want to cook? What do I really want to serve? After the menu planning comes the shopping list."

Dive into a theme

"Two weeks before the party, make sure you have everything you need for decorating and (put it up). We lost a lot of trees in Sandy, so I'm using a lot of fallen trees as decoration. All my big trays are slabs of wood cut from the trees that fell down. And I made beautiful coasters from three-inch-diameter branches that are sliced very thinly. You have to think of a theme — is it woodland or what is it? I have a theme for all of my parties. I think it's fun."

Create signature drinks

"Make a really good drink from fresh juices, the best ingredients and serve it in beautiful glasses. I'll also serve white wine. I don't serve red wine in my house because I don't want people to spill it — unless it's a seated dinner. We're going to have homemade bloody marys with homemade tomato juice, eggnog and hot mulled white wine. You have to be a little creative, thoughtful and adventurous."

Dazzle at your party

Here are Martha's top tips

- **Mingle.** "Make sure you make time to be friendly to your guests and acknowledge everybody's presence. Try to matchmake a little with the people that you think should meet each other."
- **Please be seated.** "I like to set the table for a plated and served dinner unless I'm having a very large crowd. When creating a seating chart for served dinners, I always break up couples and seat new people next to one another. I also always put myself in the least-comfortable spot."

Martha's tips will ensure your party is a success. GETTY IMAGES

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HOLIDAY 2012 gift guide

Tap into these tech gifts

iPhone 5 — $699 and up (without contract).

Samsung Galaxy Note 2 — $729 (without contract).

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

With processors and features that rival small computers, it's no wonder smartphones have quickly become the high tech gift for the holidays. There are many smartphones to choose from, but which one is right for your loved one? Take a look at our picks to find the perfect one.

iPhone 5 — $699 and up (without contract)
Featuring an all new design, Apple's latest smartphone is sure to turn heads. The diamond-cut bevelled edges not only look beautiful, they take away the rough edges, giving it an elegant feel. This is the first iPhone to feature LTE, which means you can take advantage of the latest high-speed wireless networks. The Retina display has also been made slightly larger so you get more usable workspace on the screen.

Samsung Galaxy Note 2 — $729 (without contract)
An ideal smartphone for those in marketing, advertising or someone with a creative flair. Often referred to as a smartphone/tablet hybrid, the Note II features a large 5.5-inch screen that can be navigated through touch or a special stylus known as an S Pen. Users can use the pen to sketch or draw on maps, photos or blueprints. The blazing quad-core processor gives this phone performance like no other.

Nokia Lumia 920 — $549.99 (without contract)
The most advanced Windows phone to date. Sporting wireless charging and a touchscreen so sensitive you can use it while wearing gloves, the Nokia 920 is sure to be a popular phone this holiday. The 8.7-megapixel camera also shoots surprisingly well in low light conditions.

LG Optimus G — $599 (without contract)
This smartphone has received the title of "Canada's fastest smartphone." Not only is it the first handset to feature Qualcomm's lightning-quick quad-core processor, it's also the first phone to support the 2,600 MHz spectrum, which is the fastest LTE network in the country. The Optimus G also features a voice-activated camera that will snap photos whenever someone says the word "cheese."

Sony Xperia T — $549 (no contract, price may vary)
Known simply as "The Bond Phone," the Xperia T is the same smartphone used by 007 himself in Skyfall. This handset features a 13-megapixel camera and is Playstation certified, which is perfect for those who enjoy gaming on the go. Music and photos can easily be shared by bringing this smartphone close to other NFC-enabled devices.

Mophie Powerstation Pro — $99
Smartphones are simply paperweights without a fully charged battery. Fortunately, this device will ensure your battery lasts all day and then some. The Powerstation Pro holds enough juice to recharge your smartphone up to four times. It's lightweight, rugged, dust-proof and waterproof so it's perfect for those constantly on the go.

Ballistic Cases — various prices
You spent a fortune on your new smartphone, so why not protect your investment. Ballistic cases are designed to do just that. Ballistic cases have been tested to withstand drops, being run over by vehicles, and Fido's canine teeth.

LG Optimus G — $599 (without contract), top left, Sony Xperia T — $549 (no contract, price may vary), centre, Nokia Lumia 920 — $549.99 (without contract).

4 shopping days left

Get crafty with gift wrapping

SARAH GUNN
YummyMummyClub.ca

Wrapping presents is one of my favourite things to do this time of year. I love the patterns of paper, the ribbons and the bows.

This year, though, I wanted to get a little crafty with my Christmas wrapping so I challenged myself to come up with three different ways to use brown paper.

I discovered that brown paper packages don't just have to be tied up with string — they can be decorated with almost anything. (Yes, The Sound of Music is my favourite movie of all time).

I mostly used things around the house, but if you don't have a basement full of craft supplies, you can get everything you need at any craft store.

- Paint packages in a holiday theme using craft paint.
- Use ribbon, scrapbook paper, and stickers for another look.
- Wrap your package in a band of felt and add details with felt snowflakes and letters.

YUMMYMUMMYCLUB.CA IS AN ONLINE RESOURCE TO HELP BUSY WOMEN SURVIVE MOTHERHOOD.

Challenge yourself this year by finding different ways to gift wrap your Christmast presents. JUPITERIMAGES/COMSTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Use craft paint to create a holiday theme. YUMMY MUMMY PHOTO

Wrap your package in a band of felt and add details. YUMMY MUMMY PHOTO

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Holly jolly hostess gifts

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Cable Knit Tea Cozy Red, $14.50, available at Indigo, chapters.indigo.ca.

Cucina Perfumed Candles, $15 each, available at Fruits & Passion, fruits-passion.ca.

Baléa Snowman Moisturizing Hand Soaps, $4.99 each, available at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

Ceramic Santa Mug, Red or White, $4.99 each, available at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

Ginger Hand Wash, $8, available at The Body Shop, thebodyshop.ca.

Boxed Scented Candle, $14.99, available at Homesense, homesense.ca.

Glass Magnets, $6.99, available at Winners, winners.ca.

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AT YOUR SERVICE

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At Maxwell Altima Realty, real estate is their life.

"Our clients are our top priority," says Clair Whittington, broker, MaxWell Altima Realty.

"We pledge to offer superior, honest and courteous service, with integrity, without pressure."

MaxWell Altima Realty has recently opened in Regina, expanding from its established base in Alberta and B.C.

As a proud Canadian real estate franchise, they have been providing second-to-none customer service as a full-service real estate company since 1999, with more than 6,000 customers and families putting their trust in MaxWell Realty and their realtors for their real-estate needs each year.

They provide all real-estate services, such as residential, commercial, farm and acreage, revenue, property management, new construction, and development projects.

Big or small, they can do it all.

"We can accommodate from first-time buyer to the multi-million dollar sub-division development," says Whittington.

"We will use all the latest technology and tools available to our industry to help our customers answer their needs, achieve their goals and make their dreams reality."

Buying or selling property can be extremely stressful, but MaxWell works hard to make the experience as pleasant as possible.

MaxWell Altima Realty is committed to dealing in a professional manner by working together, providing leadership and innovative solutions.

"We will always try to set the highest standards in our relationships with other businesses as we strive for excellence," says Whittington.

At MaxWell Altima Realty, they aim to operate as a boutique brokerage of elite realtors who exist to satisfy their client needs.

"We have plans for rapid expansion across Saskatchewan, operating under the same business model that focuses on client satisfaction as the ultimate goal," says Whittington.

For more information about MaxWell Altima Realty, call 306-525-6527, or visit maxwellaltimarealty.ca.

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Whether you are looking to buy or sell a home, MaxWell Realty Inc. is giving you the chance to win $5,000 towards your dream vacation.

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DRIVEN TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

By working within the community of Regina, MaxWell Altima Realty understands the importance of giving back to the community where they serve.

"Community involvement is paramount," says Clair Whittington, broker, MaxWell Altima Realty.

"We feel driven to give back to the community that gives so much to us as agents, both altruistically and constructively."

Understanding the needs of their customers helps the realtors at MaxWell Altima Realty ultimately understands the needs of the community.

By listening to their customers and developing genuine, trusting relationships with those that they serve, MaxWell Altima is able to recognize where help may be needed.

MaxWell Altima Realty has joined up with a number of worthy causes in the community.

As their charity of choice, MaxWell has teamed up with Kids Help Phone to help provide safety and security for troubled and abused kids in the community and across the country.

This important relationship began in 2003, and MaxWell has since generously donated more than $306,000 to ensure children and youth have a safe place to turn when they are in need of help and hope.

Another way MaxWell and Kids Help Phone, along with the Girl Guides of Canada, helps to give back is through the Share the Bear initiative.

The Share the Bear initiative sees new and gently loved teddy bears collected and given to police to give to young victims of crime.

Bears are collected throughout the year, and once a year, they are presented to the police, who distribute them to children or youth who have been a witness or victim of crime or tragedy.

"For every member of the community, it is important to give back and be philanthropic."

On top of all they already do, the members of MaxWell Altima Realty are also active in the Association of Regina "Quality of Life" and "Care" initiatives.

Whether they are helping your make your real estate dreams come true or supporting your community and the needs of its people, MaxWell Altima Realty is pleased to be a member of the Regina community.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

This holiday season, Maxwell Altima Realty would like to extend their warmest holiday wishes to all residents of Regina.

As the new company on the block, they wish you and your family the very best over the holidays and look forward to working with you in the new year.

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Put the joy and excitement back into moving when you choose to buy or sell with MaxWell Altima Realty.

There is no need to take the buying or selling journey alone. At MaxWell Altima Realty, the professionally trained staff will help you take the stress out of your experience and help you get what you need.

When looking to buy or sell in the Regina market, Clair Whittington, broker, MaxWell Altima Realty, recommends finding an agent to help you with your real-estate needs.

"Always use a realtor. Consult your agent well in advance so that we can work with you to best satisfy your buying/selling needs," says Whittington.

"Our agents usually have long-standing relationships with their clients, who trust us to ensure each move is dealt with professionally and ethically whilst being mindful of price."

MaxWell Altima has educated, professional, well-trained agents who specialize in buying or selling homes, ensuring each transaction is streamlined, stress free and a positive experience.

"Our agents will assist sellers in correctly pricing a house for sale, and ensuring that the property is well exposed to the buying market through a multitude of medias," says Whittington.

They can also assist with advice on property presentation and arrange interior decorator consultations.

"We will ensure the property is best presented so that the client maximizes profit when selling," says Whittington.

The agents at MaxWell Altima Realty are well versed in the Regina real estate market and are well-suited to help you along the way.

Whittington says the real estate market in 2012 was strong, equally for buying or selling, and she anticipates much of the same for 2013.

"Interest rates are low, and are forecasted to stay that way," says Whittington.

"Inventory has been turned over quickly, rental vacancy rates remain low and there has been strong activity in new home starts."

She adds that rising prices over the past number of years will also support move-up buying and the investor segment with the strong demand putting upward pressure on property values.

"Of the major centres, Regina is projected to see the highest average price growth next year of over eight per cent, says Whittington.

"An increase in new listings in 2013 will help slow price growth."

THE RIGHT FIT IS KEY

Finding the right real estate agent can be just as important as finding the right home.

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Seasons Greetings

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GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH MAXWELL

At MaxWell Altima Realty, they want to give you the tools to make you the most confident buyer/seller you can be.

Whether it is your first time buying or selling a home, the MaxWell Altima Realty website contains a number of valuable tips on how to get the most out of your real estate experience.

For buyers in the Regina real estate market, it is about finding the right home to suite your lifestyle and in the right community.

If you are looking for a new home near the hustle and bustle of the city, where you can be within walking distance of your place of employment, favourite restaurant or night spot, looking in the city core might be the place for you.

But if you don't enjoy the sights and sounds of downtown city life, maybe a rural property is in your future.

Once you have decided where to plant your roots, it is time to decide what type of home will suite you best.

If you are a single, working professional or an empty nester, a condo or a townhouse may prove be the ideal new home.

If you are looking for something a little bigger for your future family, already existing growing family, or because you like a little more space, a single-family detached home can meet these needs.

These homes can range from a single-storey suburban bungalow to a three-storey Victorian, depending on your budget and lifestyle needs.

For the first-time homebuyer, your MaxWell Altima Realty agent will help you choose the right home for you.

For existing homeowners, selling their current home is almost always required before getting into a new one.

Deciding when to sell can make the all the difference and your MaxWell Altima Realty agent can work with you to make the timing work in your favour.

Once you have decided to sell your home, the online tools on the MaxWell Altima Realty website give you a number of tips to prepare your home for sale, stating the value of a first impression.

For those just considering buying or selling in Regina, check out maxwellaltimarealty.ca to be better prepared for your future real estate journey.

YOUR DREAM IS A CLICK AWAY

Your dream home may only be a click away.

The MaxWell Altima Realty website frequently updates their website with new listings in Saskatchewan.

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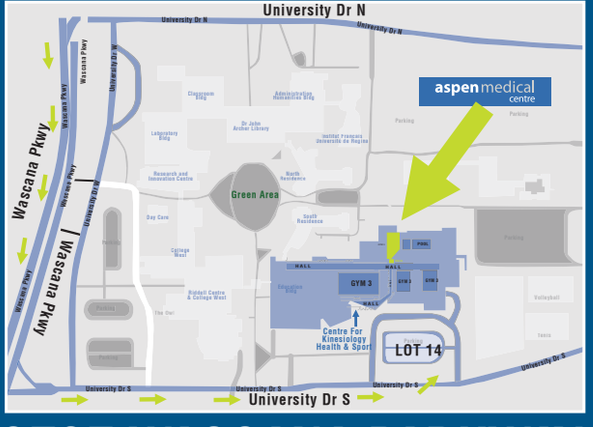

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4 SPORTS

World juniors

'Discipline is the subplot' in Canada's loss in Finland

It was an early wake-up call for Canada's world junior team. Undisciplined and out of sorts, the Canadians dropped an exhibition game to host Finland 3-2 on Thursday. Two of the Finnish goals were scored with a 5-on-3 power play during a game that saw Canada assessed nine minor penalties in total.

"I think the challenge for us obviously is coming together as a team," said Canadian coach Steve Spott. "It's our first game. But ultimately I think discipline is the subplot here tonight, where we have to get used to the standard of officiating and deal with our discipline a lot smarter than we did tonight."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lockout

Season closer to cancellation with more games axed

The NHL has moved one step closer to calling off another season because of a labour dispute.

Regular-season games through Jan. 14 were wiped off the schedule on Thursday afternoon, setting up a potential timeline for the league's collective bargaining negotiations with the NHL Players' Association.

It was likely the final batch of games that will be cancelled if commissioner Gary Bettman holds true to his word that the league must play at least a 48-game schedule with playoffs ending in June. The next announcement from the league will either be a new CBA or a second cancelled season in eight years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nathan MacKinnon, from Sidney Crosby's hometown of Cole Harbour, N.S., is living his dream overseas with a spot on Canada's world junior roster. The youngest player on Team Canada is considered a possible No. 1 pick in the 2013 NHL draft. JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MacKinnon dreaming of gold this Christmas

World juniors. Highly touted 17-year-old living dream with chance for glory with Team Canada

PHILIP CROUCHER
Metro in Halifax

Nathan MacKinnon will wake up Christmas morning far away from the comforts of home.

He'll open his eyes in a Russian hotel room next to a teammate who, like him, is spending the holidays thousands of miles from the family gatherings and traditions he's come to love.

Still, there is no place MacKinnon would rather be this holiday season. That's because the 17-year-old Cole Harbour, N.S., standout with the Halifax Mooseheads is fulfilling a dream — one shared by most teenagers who lace up their skates — to play for Canada at the world junior hockey championships.

"It's different, but I'm doing something that I love. I'm having a lot of fun," he said Thursday by phone after playing in Canada's first exhibition game, a 3-2 loss to Finland. "It would be nice to be home for Christmas, but this is an excellent thing."

MacKinnon, who doesn't turn 18 until September, is the youngest member of Team Canada, but goes into the tournament with plenty of expectations.

A potential first overall pick in next year's NHL draft, MacKinnon will be looked upon to play an important role among 18- and 19-year-olds.

Quoted

"It was a cool experience — a world junior game — it was exciting. And I'm sure every game is going to get more and more exciting."

Nathan MacKinnon, on playing for Team Canada in a 3-2 exhibition loss to Finland Thursday

Whatever that role turns out to be, MacKinnon is ready to accept it. With the Mooseheads, he's on the No. 1 line and getting plenty of power-play time. With Team Canada, he could be used as a 13th forward and get the odd shift on special teams.

"I want to help the team and I want to be an impact player," said MacKinnon, who sits third in Quebec Major Junior Hockey League scoring with 22 goals and 30 assists in 30 games. "But I'm going to do whatever role I'm given and hopefully the team can be successful."

MacKinnon is the first Nova Scotian to play at the world juniors for Canada since 2007 and 2008, when Brad Marchand of Hammonds Plains cracked the team.

Ivor Wynne reduced to rubble in Hamilton

Construction crews continue to dismantle Ivor Wynne Stadium, the former home of the CFL's Tiger-Cats, on Thursday in Hamilton, Ont. The work is expected to be completed in February. SCOTT GARDNER/THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

CFL

Condell follows Austin to Ticats

Tommy Condell is following Kent Austin to the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

Austin hired Condell as Hamilton's offensive co-ordinator and receivers coach Thursday. The move comes three days after Austin was named the Ticats' head coach, GM and vice-president of football operations.

Condell joins the Ticats after serving as Austin's assistant head coach and wide receivers coach for three seasons at Cornell.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Hall of Famer Keys passes away at 89

Canadian Football Hall of Fame inductee Eagle Keys has died at the age of 89.

Keys played centre and linebacker with the Montreal Alouettes (1949-51) and with the Edmonton Eskimos (1952-54), being named to three all-star teams. He became a coach, starting as an assistant in Edmonton in 1955. He was named the Esks' head coach in 1959, a job he held until 1963. Keys also coached the Roughriders (1965-70) and B.C. Lions (1971-75).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Champions League. Real Madrid draw Man United

Real Madrid will face Manchester United in a mouth-watering Champions League last-16 clash that sends Cristiano Ronaldo back to where he made his reputation, and Jose Mourinho to the club many believe he wants to coach one day.

United manager Alex Ferguson called it "the tie of the round," and Real Madrid director Emilio Butragueno said it would be "thrilling for everybody."

In another blockbuster pairing in Thursday's draw, Champions League favourite Barcelona and Lionel Messi will play seven-time winner AC Milan.

Arsenal will face Bayern Munich, last season's beaten finalist, and big-spending Paris Saint-Germain was paired with Valencia.

Also, it will be: Celtic vs. Juventus, Shakhtar Donetsk vs. Borussia Dortmund, FC Porto vs. Malaga, and Galatasaray vs. Schalke.

"It's a great opportunity for our fans to see Cristiano again and also for me to meet up with Jose again," Ferguson said in a statement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Round of 16

First-leg matches are to be played from Feb. 12 to 20. Return matches are from March 5 to 13.

English soccer

England moves to tackle racism

The English Football Association has approved proposals to help stamp out the resurgence of racism in the national game.

The Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination Action Plan was requested by British Prime Minister David Cameron after high-profile racism cases involving Chelsea captain John Terry and Liverpool forward Luis Suarez last season, and various fan incidents.

Among the proposals, managers and players will have "mandatory induction arrangements" if they are new to the "British cultural environment."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blown-call fallout being felt with playoffs on line

Wide receiver Golden Tate of the Seattle Seahawks was controversially ruled to have caught a touchdown pass to defeat the Green Bay Packers on Sept. 24 in Seattle. GREULE JR/GETTY IMAGES

NFL. Seahawks can help Packers get No. 2 spot and a bye with win over 49ers

Pay up, Seahawks.

The Green Bay Packers have put the Inaccurate Reception behind them, and they've done their best not to begrudge Seattle the win that really wasn't. But karma has a way of coming back around, and the Seahawks have a chance to make things right this weekend.

"Without looking in the past, we have to root for a team we fell short to," Packers linebacker Clay Matthews said Thursday. "So that's how it goes. We'll control our own destiny by winning these out and hopefully we can get some help along the way."

San Francisco (10-3-1) is a game ahead of Green Bay (10-4) for the NFC's No. 2 seed and Seattle plays the 49ers on Sunday night. Beat the Niners and the Seahawks can essentially get the Packers back to where they would have been had replacement referees not blown that call back in September.

Which means that, providing they beat Tennessee on Sunday afternoon, the Packers will be rooting for the Seahawks.

"I don't know if they owe us anything — not them, in particular," Matthews said.

But if the Seahawks want to wipe the karmic slate clean, who are the Packers to argue?

"We want home field," James Jones said, "so hopefully they get it done."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The fail mary

The Inaccurate Reception was arguably the worst call of the NFL season.

- Green Bay safety M.D. Jennings appeared to intercept a pass to Seahawks wide receiver Golden Tate in the end zone only to have it ruled a touchdown.
- The NFL said the next day Tate should have been called for interference.

metro
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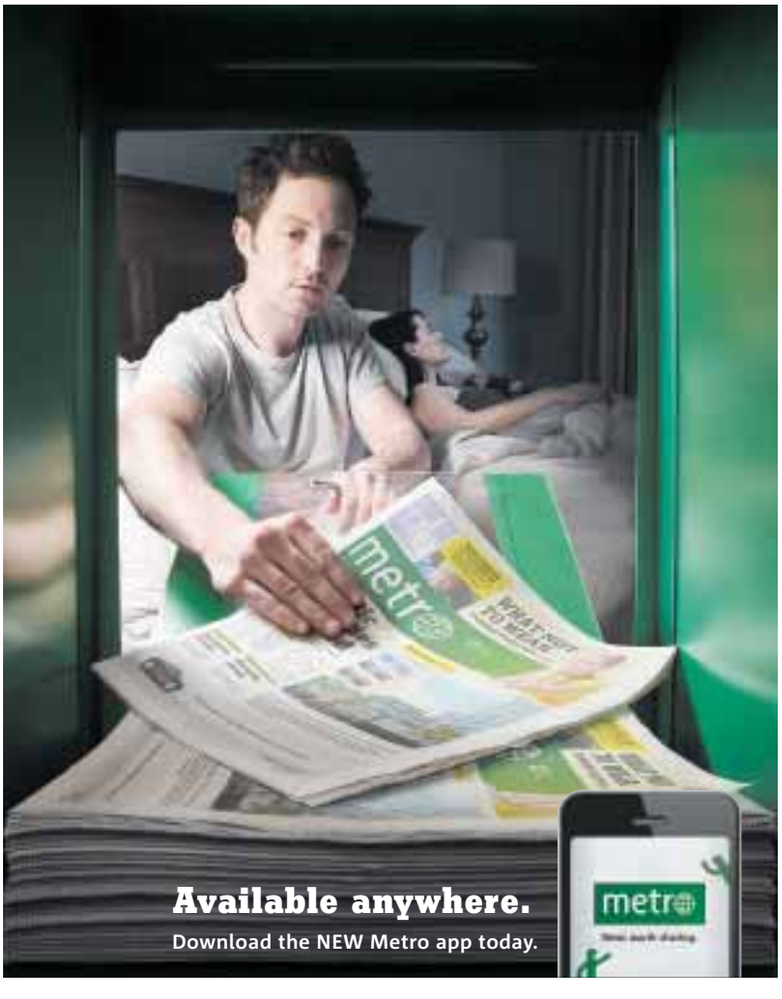


Horoscopes

Aries
March 21 - April 20
Whatever your age or position, you are about to get the chance to move up in the world. Powerful people will be watching you closely today and over the weekend, so make sure they like what they see.

Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Times are good and about to get even better. It may take two or three days for things to pick up speed but once they do, you will be on a roller coaster ride of fun and games. Hang on and enjoy the experience.

Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Most likely you are reading too much into a situation that is of no real importance but for your own peace of mind, you should investigate further. If someone is trying to take you for a ride — get off quick!

Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You will notice a subtle change in the way other people react to you today. But it is the way that you choose to behave towards them that will determine whether the next few weeks are going to be easy or difficult.

Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
The Sun's change of signs puts the emphasis on matters of a work nature, and also on your physical health. The two are closely related. In a nutshell: If you work too hard your wellbeing may suffer. Slow down!

Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You don't have to do anything special today: The Sun's change of signs will do it all for you. One of the most active times of the year is about to begin, so prepare yourself mentally for what lies ahead.

Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
No matter how many interesting things may be taking place in the world, you must focus exclusively on the needs and desires of loved ones today. There has never been a better time to show how much you care.

Scorpio
Oct. 2 04 - Nov. 22
Keep your options open today because there will be all sorts of new and interesting events taking place and you need to be free to react to any or all of them. Part of the meaning of life is to have fun.

Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
The past few weeks have been hectic to say the least and the momentum you have built up will keep you going for quite some time. But don't forget you have limits.

Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You may be eager to get started on a new project but think before you act. Make sure you are well prepared. Any day can be a new beginning. Though, yes, this one is more special than most.

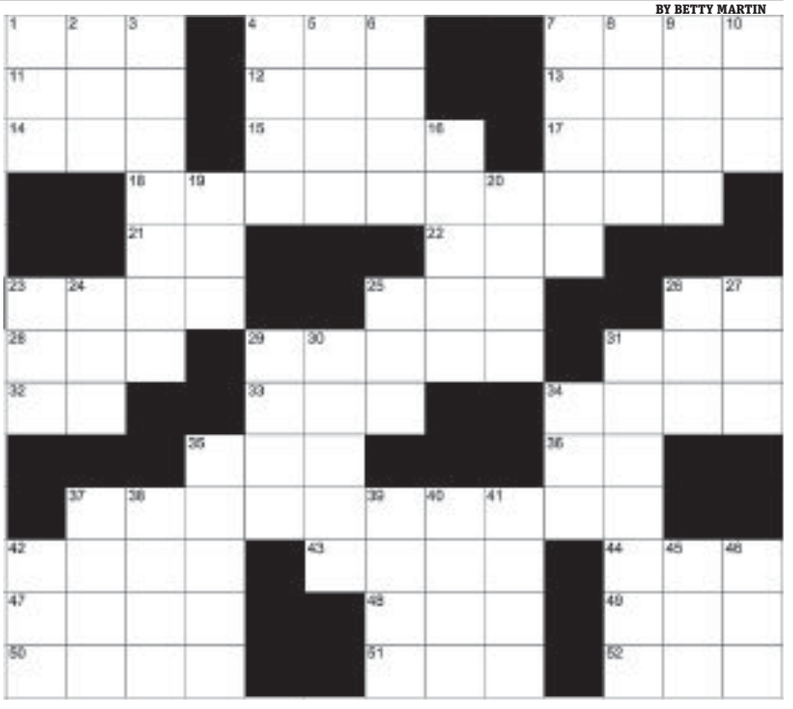
Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You may be a bit more reclusive than usual today and over the weekend but there is no need to worry about it. You're not withdrawing from the world, you're just getting your thoughts and feelings in order.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You seem to be having doubts about something that only a few days ago you thought was the best idea in the world. The good news is your doubts will pass very quickly and then you can get on and make it happen.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword

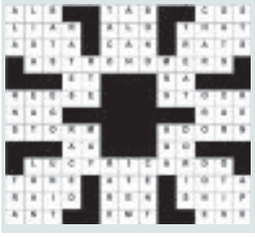
BY BETTY MARTIN



Across
1. Fishing need
4. To and —
7. Catch sight of
11. Silkworm
12. Make tracks
13. Desire
14. Schedule abbr.
15. Sale condition
17. Garfield pal
18. Seafarer's beacon
21. Disco proof of age (abbr.)
22. Select
23. Flintstone pet
25. Before
26. Magnum, P.I.'s pilot buddy
28. School subj.
29. — Acres
31. Cruise setting
32. Emergency room personnel (abbr.)
33. — Lingus
34. Smack a fly
35. Tavern brew
36. "Dirty Harry" actor (init.)
37. Eastern prov.
42. Cloak
43. Fashion magazine
44. Scottish cap
47. Barbra's "Funny Girl" co-star
48. Be indisposed
49. View
50. Hide
51. One of The Three Stooges
52. Family tree member (abbr.)

Down
1. Soak flax
2. Globe
3. Ringing up, old style
4. Flown at the 2012 Olympic games
5. Poison ivy result
6. Exclude
7. Whoop
8. Pea jackets
9. Mayberry boy
10. Casual top
16. Sandcastle spot
19. Wedding vows
20. Diner sign
23. German article
24. Quaint hotels
25. According to
26. Afternoon gathering
27. Garfield, for one
29. Elaborate party
30. Actress Witherspoon
31. Spring or Fall clothing
34. Chem. or biol.
35. Deviate
37. Point a finger at
38. October birthstone
39. Type of chowder
40. Stew
41. Prefix with confidence
42. Officer of the peace
45. Yes, to Angus
46. Actor Gibson

Yesterday's Crossword



What's online

See today's answers metronews.ca/answers.

Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

7		8	9				4	
		3			2			1
		1			6	3		
				3		5	8	
	9	6		5				
		9	7			6		
6			8			7		
	2				4	1		5

Yesterday's Sudoku

CORRECTION

The .05 ct. Canadian Diamond Pendant which appeared in Simon's Jewellery Ad in the Dec. 17 issue should have read Double Heart Pendant. Metro apologizes for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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